

Baking Cookies

Method

Separate the egg whites and let it sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes. Then, in a separate bowl, sift in icing sugar and powdered almond and get rid of any lumps. Add a pinch of salt to the mixture. After the egg whites come to room temperature, add a pinch of salt and start beating the egg whites and gradually add 1/4 cup sugar. When they have stiff peaks, add 1 tsp vanilla extract and the food colour. Then add the dry mix to the egg whites, 1/3 at a time, and fold gently. When you can form a ribbon shape without the batter breaking, that's when the folding is done. Then, fill your piping bag up with the batter and pipe the macarons onto the lined tray. Bang or drop the tray a few times on your counter top to get a smooth surface. Let the macarons rest for about 30-40 minutes, and then bake them on a preheated oven for 20-17 minutes at 150° C.

Once they are out of the oven, let them cool completely before adding the filling. I personally use melted white chocolate as filling, but you are free to choose your own flavour.

MARBLE COOKIES OR PINWHEEL COOKIES

Ingredients

½ cup butter
½ cup brown sugar
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla extract

2½ cup flour

1 tsp liquid food colour or drop of red gel food colour

Method

First, melt the butter, then add all the ingredients, one after the other, and mix well to form the dough. Divide the dough into two portions. Then add food colour to one portion and knead well to mix the colour. Now you can either make pinwheel cookies or marble cookies with this dough.

For pinwheel cookies, roll both the doughs out about ½cm thick. Then lay the red dough on top of the other dough, and then roll up both the doughs together like a Swiss roll, and let the roll rest in the fridge for about 2 hours. After taking the roll out of the fridge, cut it into slices like a Swiss roll. Then run the rolling pin over the cookies a few times and then bake them.

For marble cookies, knead the doughs together partially, and then roll it out, cut into desired shapes, and bake them in a preheated oven at 165° C or 20-15 minutes.

MERINGUE COOKIES

Ingredients

½ cup or 3 egg whites
1 tsp lemon juice
1 cup sugar
1 tsp strawberry extract
1 tsp liquid food colour or drop of gel food colour

Method

Take your egg whites and start beating them with a hand mixer on low speed. When

bubbles start to form, add the lemon juice. Then start increasing the speed gradually. After the egg whites start becoming frothy, start adding the sugar 1 tablespoon at a time. Keep on beating until all the sugar has



dissolved and the egg whites have stiff peaks. A quick tip is to heat the sugar up in the oven for a few minutes before adding them to the egg whites. When the egg whites have stiff peaks, add vanilla extract. Turn your piping bag inside out, and colour the inside of the bag using a brush. Fill the bag up with your meringue mix and pipe them onto the tray lined with baking paper. Bake the cookies for 30-40 minutes at 140° C. After baking the cookies, let them cool in the oven by keeping the oven door ajar.

RED VELVET COOKIES

Ingredients

½ cup milk
1 tbsp white vinegar or lemon juice



½ cup butter

4 tbsp sugar

1 egg

¼ cup cocoa powder

1 tsp vanilla extract

2½ cup flour

1 tsp liquid food colour or drop of red gel food colour

½ cup whipped cream

¼ cup cream-cheese

Method

Take 1/2 cup milk and add 1 tablespoon white vinegar or lemon juice to it and let it rest for 30 minutes. This will act as a substitute for buttermilk. In a bowl, add melted butter and the buttermilk, then add all the ingredients in order, except the whipped cream and cream cheese. Mix well and form the dough. Roll out the dough and cut into your desired shapes. Bake the cookies at 165° C for 30-20 minutes. In a bowl, beat your cream-cheese and in another bowl, whip up your whipped cream and then combine them together. Once the cookies are done, let them cool and then pipe the frosting on top.

By Tanisha Tanzia

Photo courtesy: Tanisha Tanzia

SPECIAL FEATURE

Made of chocolate, drizzled with love!

Baked to perfection, and with dollops of chocolate to melt any heart, 11-year-old Samaya Chowdhury's utterly divine cakes and desserts will please even the most discriminating palate. While you may find a child wanting to spend her time in the kitchen slightly weird, little Samaya wouldn't have it any other way!



A regular day in Samaya's life starts with her going to school in the morning, returning by afternoon, finishing her school homework and baking in the evening to fulfil her orders. It is only after she has completed all of her orders that she calls it a day and heads to bed. It leaves one wondering about the pressures on this 11-year-old, but as Samaya very sheepishly points out, she loves baking so much that it simply doesn't tire her!

Ever since she was 3 years old, she was a keen helper in the kitchen. Inspired by her nanu's baking escapades, she insisted on holding the beater with

her nanu, whenever a cake was being made. An active kitchen was her haven, and she could sit for hours watching her mum and nanu, both food enthusiasts, prepare delicacies.

Her mother Nabila recalls, "Every time we tried to bake something, she would always come and try to help out, but at that time it wasn't really helping out, it was more of a mess. Initially, I used to fuss about the mess she made, but my mother always told me that if she's interested, let her learn, don't brush her off."

At the age of 5, Samaya stepped out of the side lines, and made her very first

paratha, and has never looked back since. By the time she was 9 years old, she had started baking on her own, and for her 10th birthday, she was delighted to receive her own oven and an electric beater as a gift from her family, along with some other baking essentials.

"I had been wanting to go buy an oven for a long time, so when I saw it packed and sitting on the table as my birthday present, I was super excited! I love baking, and I can make red velvet, black forest, vanilla, chocolate and coffee cakes, but now, I want to try baking even more varieties of cakes," says Samaya excitedly.

